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ABSTRACT

This packet assists teachers and students in preparing for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Grade 5 and 8 Writing Assessments. Sections of the packet are: Map of the Regional Network for Communications Arts (including local contacts); Calendar of Professional Development Events; Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Resources; Models of the Assessments (including sample papers and scoring guide); and Similarities and Differences between Assessments. (RS)

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ED 429 319

Resource Packet forNew Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

Writing Assessments at Grade 5 & 8

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Michigan Education Assessment Program

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CS 216 689

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June, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interest Parties

FROM: Michigan Educational Assessment Program

SUBJECT: Resource Packet for New Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Writing Assessments at Grades 5 and 8

Enclosed are materials we hope you will find helpful as you prepare teachers and students for the new MEAP Grade 5 and 8 Writing Assessments to be given the last week of February and the first two weeks of March, 1996.

These materials were prepared by the Communication Arts Assessment Professional Development Planning Committee (made up of representatives from the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, the Michigan Reading Association, and the Curriculum Development and MEAP offices of the Michigan Department of Education) as well as educators central to the development of the assessments.

Included are the following items:

Map of the Regional Network for Communications Arts (including local contacts)
Calendar of Professional Development Events
Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Resources
Models of the Assessments (including sample papers and scoring guide)
Similarities and Differences Between Assessments

The Models of the Assessments are comprised of test items which come from discarded tryout forms. These items were rejected for various reasons during the extensive review process. While they are very similar to what students will see on the assessments in the fall, they are dropped items and, as such, may be of lesser quality than those that make it to the fall operational administration.

To assist you in sharing these Models and other support materials with teachers, students, and parents, over 170 people representing every school improvement region of the state have been trained to present professional development workshops on the new assessments. Please feel free to call upon the contact people listed on the Regional Network map.

In addition, please do not hesitate to call Anne Bendixen, MEAP Writing Consultant at 517/373-8393, if you have questions about the enclosed materials.

Thank you for your leadership in this professional development effort.

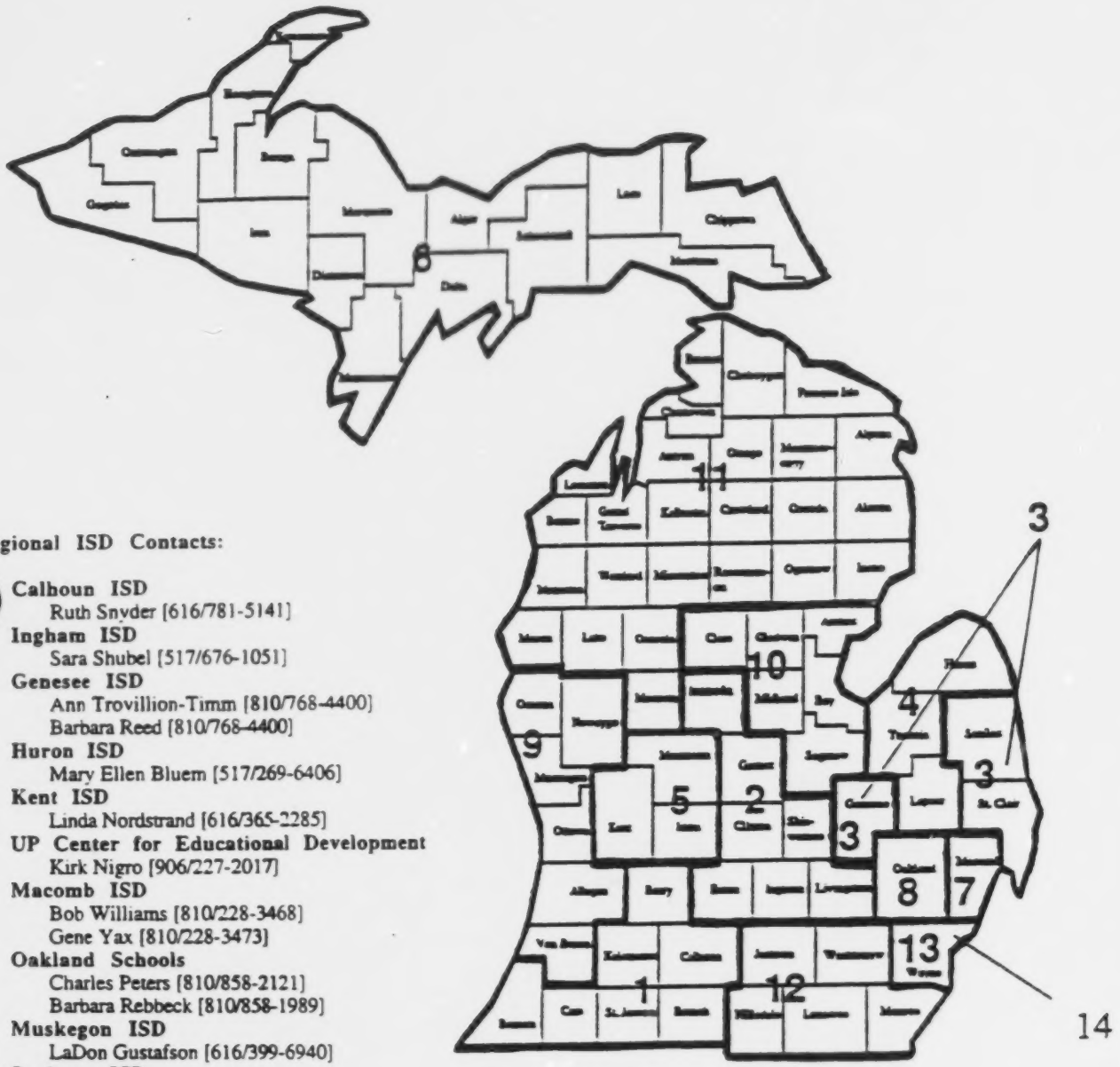
Enclosures

COMMUNICATION ARTS
ELEMENTARY
INFORMATION PACKET

Section 1

- Communication Arts Network Map
- Calendar of Events
- Writing and Reading Recommended Resources

COMMUNICATION ARTS ASSESSMENT
Regional Network



Regional ISD Contacts:

Calhoun ISD
Ruth Snyder [616/781-5141]

2 **Ingham ISD**
Sara Shubel [517/676-1051]

3 **Genesee ISD**
Ann Trovillion-Timm [810/768-4400]
Barbara Reed [810/768-4400]

4 **Huron ISD**
Mary Ellen Bluem [517/269-6406]

5 **Kent ISD**
Linda Nordstrand [616/365-2285]

6 **UP Center for Educational Development**
Kirk Nigro [906/227-2017]

7 **Macomb ISD**
Bob Williams [810/228-3468]
Gene Yax [810/228-3473]

8 **Oakland Schools**
Charles Peters [810/858-2121]
Barbara Rebbeck [810/858-1989]

9 **Muskegon ISD**
LaDon Gustafson [616/399-6940]

10 **Saginaw ISD**
Bart Jenniches [517/799-4733]
Sue May [517/631-5890]

11 **NLM-LTLC**
Michelle Johnston [616/922-1731]
Dennis Rosen [616/796-3543]

12 **Washtenaw ISD**
Kathy Cambria [313/994-8100]

Wayne RESA
Olga Moir [313/467-1564]
Karen Urbschat [313/467-1300]

14 **Detroit**
Ronald Kar [313/494-1603]

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High School Proficiency Test in Communication Arts
Professional Development Planning Committee

1995 Calendar of Events

Date	*Activity*	*Contact*
March		
3-4	MDE/MRA/MCTE Communication Arts Assessment Training of Trainers Conference, East Lansing	Sheila Potter (517) 373-1342
9	Detroit Public Schools' March Write-in, University of Detroit Mercy's campus, Detroit	Mary C. Cox (313) 824-4778
11-14	39th Annual Michigan Reading Association Conference. Amway Grand Plaza/Grand Center, Grand Rapids	Ann Laurimore (616) 946-8595
16-18	National Council of Teachers of English Spring Language Arts Conference. Minneapolis, Minnesota	(800) 369-NCTE
23-24	Upper Peninsula Communications Arts Assessment Training of Trainers Conference, Marquette	Kirk Nigro (906) 227-2017
April		
1	Michigan State University's Spring Conference on the English Language Arts (Bright Ideas). Co-Sponsored by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, East Lansing, MSU Union Building.	Marilyn Wilson (517) 372-1772
8	Saginaw Valley's Spring Conference. Co-Sponsored by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English	Mary Harmon (517) 723-7815
30-May 5	International Reading Association Convention, Anaheim, California	(800) 336-READ
June		
26-July 14	Oakland Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute, Oakland Schools, Pontiac	Barbara Rebbeck (810) 858-1989
26-July 21	Third Coast Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute, Western Michigan University Kalamazoo	Ellen Brinkley (616) 387-2581

26-July 21	National Writing Project: Metro-Detroit's Invitational Summer Institute, at the University of Detroit Mercy (Open Sessions: June 26-30, July 10-14), Detroit	Ronald Kar (313) 527-1186
	Eastern Michigan Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute (Open Session—mornings—June 26-July 14), Ypsilanti	Cathy Fleischer (313) 487-4220
	Saginaw Valley Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute	Kay Harley (517) 790-4354
	Red Cedar Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing	Janet Swenson (517) 336-3610
	Flint Area Writing Project	Lois Rosen (810) 762-3285
July		
27-30	Whole Language Umbrella Conference, Windsor, Ontario. Conference Theme: "Celebrating Communities." Opening Keynote—Robert Munsch	Judy Kelly (313) 676-7693
August		
-4	Michigan Reading Association's Summer Literature Conference. Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michign	Marlene Smith (616) 983-7932
15-16	Upper Peninsula Summer English Languge Arts Institute—Curriculum Instruction, and Assessment, Marquette	Kirk Nigro (906) 227-2017
24-25	Detroit Public Schools' Second English Language Arts Conference, K-12. University of Detroit/ Mercy (Ward) Conference Center, Detroit	Barbara Coulter (313) 494-1601
September		
18-20	Annual Conference of Michigan Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD), Ypsilanti	Ben Hamilton (517) 373-4003
October		
13	Engfest at Western Michigan University Co-Sponsored by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, Kalamazoo. Conference Theme: "Making Connections." Featured Speaker: Maryann Smith, Associate Executive Director of NCTE.	C. Weaver (616) 387-2599 or M. Haines (616) 387-2627

13	Upper Peninsula Reading Association Conference, Marquette	Jean Hetrick (906) 228-7405
27-28	Michigan Council of Teachers of English Annual Fall Conference, Lansing	Marilyn Wilson (517) 372-1772
31	Michigan Secondary Reading Interest Council (MRIC), Fall Research Conference, Kellogg Center, East Lansing	Anne Greashaber (313) 663-5351
November		
16-21	National Council of Teachers of English English Annual Convention, San Diego, California	(800) 369-NCTE

Writing and Reading: Recommended Resources

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates our short list; if you plan to acquire only one or two resources to address a whole range of issues, we recommend these most highly.

Programs, Writing Across the Curriculum

Farrell-Childers, Pamela; Anne Gere and Art Young, eds. *Programs and Practices: Writing Across the Secondary School Curriculum.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. An invaluable text for those wanting to establish writing across the curriculum programs, this collection includes classroom stories from many different contexts and content areas. Each author describes how writing is used to learn in a particular setting.

Krater, Joan; Jane Zeni, Nancy Develin Cason, and other members of the Webster Groves Writing Project. *Mirror Images: Teaching Writing in Black and White.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. This book chronicles the journey of a Missouri action research team, made up of middle school and high school teachers, as it refuses to accept underachievement by African American student writers. An example of the sort of research-based, ethical practice we should be moving toward if we are serious about school reform.

*Lester, Nancy B., and Cynthia S. Onore. *Learning Change: One School District Meets Language Across the Curriculum.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1990. Lester and Onore describe a four-year program of substantive professional development in a New York state school district. This book would be helpful for districts attempting to encourage classroom-based reform, yet dissatisfied with short term in-service programs.

Tchudi, Stephen, ed. *The Astonishing Curriculum: Integrating Science and Humanities Through Language.* Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1993. This collection includes a variety of classroom stories and ideas for developing an integrated curriculum.

Elementary

Atwell, Nancie, ed. *Coming to Know: Writing to Learn in the Intermediate Grades.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. This text, written by classroom teachers grades 3-6, presents many ways to use writing in content area study, including learning logs and research projects in every subject. An appendix features learning log prompts for a whole host of topics.

*Calkins, Lucy. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. This revised and expanded version of Calkins' classic text is worth its weight in gold for teachers in elementary grades, and quite useful for secondary teachers, too. Calkins has modified and clarified her perspective on the teaching of writing as a result of 10 more years of work in classrooms. The book includes chapters on assessment, thematic instruction, non-fiction writing, home-school connections, and curriculum.

Calkins, Lucy. *Living Between the Lines*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. This passionately-written book describes classrooms where the walls between school and wider community have "come tumbling down." Discussions of writers' notebooks, conferring strategies, genre studies, mini-lessons, and organizational structures for workshops are lucid and helpful. Upper elementary and middle school teachers will find it especially pertinent.

Graves, Donald. *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. Graves, who has led hundreds of thousands of teachers to rethink their teaching of writing through his books and workshops, synthesizes his current understandings in this practical, understandable book.

Harwayne, Shelley. *Lasting Impressions: Weaving Literature into the Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992. In this book, Harwayne examines the various roles literature can play in an elementary or middle school classroom. She also describes how careful, strategic use of literature can help students grow as writers. She discusses how to build a classroom community using notebooks, book talks, genre studies, etc.

Lane, Barry. *After 'The End': Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993. Teachers often talk about the difficulty of introducing revision to young writers. This books is filled with practical, almost painless revision strategies that have proven effective in the classroom.

Manning, Maryann; Gary Manning, and Roberta Long. *Theme Immersion: Inquiry-Based Curriculum in Elementary and Middle Schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. This book describes what it means to foreground inquiry--on the part of teachers and learners--and to move away from traditional theme studies and units. Detailed examples in all elementary and middle school grades, complete with photographs.

*Routman, Regie. *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. This book is exhaustive in its scope, which ranges from conducting guided reading activities to keeping anecdotal records to establishing teacher support groups. It also includes "blue pages," carefully annotated resource lists for the whole language teacher.

Secondary

Andrasick, Kathleen. *Opening Texts: Using Writing to Teach Literature.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990. This book, written by a high school teacher in a college preparatory setting, describes a flexible, theory-based approach that promotes student engagement in literary text and development of critical stance through writing and discussion. Features examples of student work and lessons.

*Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987. This award-winning text has inspired countless English language arts teachers to reconceptualize their teaching of writing and reading. It includes a wealth of practical classroom ideas.

Christenbury, Leila. *Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1993. This recent text situates writing within an integrated English language arts classroom and addresses issues of current interest, e.g., technology, multiculturalism, etc.

Kirby, Dan, and Tom Liner, with Ruth Vinz. *Inside Out: Developmental Strategies for Teaching Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1988. Two advocates for process writing approaches, along with an exemplary high school teacher, collaborate to outline sensible, classroom-tested ways to teach writing in middle and high schools. Engaging and useful.

*Rief, Linda. *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991. Written by an eighth grade teacher who teaches 125 students a day, this book is a practical guide to developing an integrated English language arts classroom community. Rief includes ten portfolios of student work, featuring reading lists, reading response, and writing in various genre.

Romano, Tom. *Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1987. Drawing on long experience as a high school teacher, this author has written one of the very best books about teaching and learning writing.

Willis, Meredith Sue. *Deep Revision: A Guide for Teachers, Students and Other Writers.* New York: Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 1993. The author provides an abundance of practical but writerly "experiments" with revision. This book is appropriate for the k-12 teacher who writes, as well as for her students. Secondary teachers in particular will appreciate the warm, sensible tone of this book.

Zemelman, Steven, and Harvey Daniels. *A Community of Writers: Teaching Writing in Junior and Senior High School.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988. This text provides broad theoretical and practical background in understanding how the teaching of writing has changed over the past 25 years. It is lively, easy reading, but comprehensive enough to become a frequently consulted reference text.

Assessment

Anthony, Robert; Terry Johnson, Norma Mickelson, and Allison Preece. *Evaluating Literacy: A Perspective for Change.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991. This book talks about assessment within a philosophical framework, spotlighting the importance of gathering authentic work samples that demonstrate growth to various audiences, including parents and community members. Appropriate reading for those seeking to put various new forms of assessment in perspective. Practically useful as well.

Graves, Donald H., and Bonnie S. Sunstein, eds. *Portfolio Portraits.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992. Written by practitioners at all levels, this book explores the possibilities for learning and teaching inherent in student-owned portfolios. A chapter by Graves on helping students learn to read their own work critically is a highlight.

Spandel, Vicki, and Richard J. Stiggins. *Creating Writers: Linking Assessment and Writing Instruction.* New York: Longman, 1990. This book provides helpful background in understanding how holistic scoring of writing works. The authors also describe a range of other scoring procedures and describe how scoring rubrics can be used to help students become able to assess their own writing independently.

Tierney, Robert J.; Carter, Mark A., and Desai, Laura E. *Portfolio Assessment in the Reading/Writing Classroom.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1991. The book begins with an overview of the causes behind the push for authentic assessment, then moves into practical discussion of literacy portfolios K-12.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom.* Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1992. This collection introduces readers to a range of portfolio possibilities that have revolutionized the teaching and assessing of writing.

General

Au, Kathryn H. *Literacy Instruction in Multicultural Settings.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. This book, a thorough, readable discussion of the implications of literacy research for ESL and at-risk populations, was written by a literacy expert who has spent years developing successful programs for Hawaiian children poorly served by traditional schooling.

Cambourne, Brian. *The Whole Story.* New York: Scholastic, 1992. Cambourne describes how language and literacy are acquired. He explore the implications of his studies for teaching and learning in schools. Cambourne's work serves as a key theoretical underpinning for whole language teachers.

Fletcher, Ralph. *What A Writer Needs.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993. This book has helped many teachers move beyond a relatively superficial understanding of process approaches to writing. Well-written and deeply engaging.

Mayher, John. *Uncommon Sense: Theoretical Practice in Language Education.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1990. Why move away from comfortable, traditional language arts practices? Why integrate reading, writing, listening and speaking in our classrooms? John Mayher explains how studies of language acquisition have caused English educators to question "common sense" methods.

Murray, Donald. *Expecting the Unexpected: Teaching Myself--and Others--to Read and Write.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1989. Written by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who has inspired much of the recent deep interest in writing, this text gets to the heart of how effective reading and writing happens.

Wells, Gordon, and Gen Ling Chang-Wells. *Constructing Knowledge Together: Classrooms as Centers of Literacy and Inquiry.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992. This book, based on collaborative research with teachers in multi-lingual urban communities and schools, grounds theoretical discussions of sociocultural view of language and literacy with concrete, innovative classroom examples.

Some Relevant Professional Journals:

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)--*Primary Voices, From the Middle, English Journal*
International Reading Association (IRA)--*The Reading Teacher*
Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE)--*Language Arts Journal of Michigan*
Michigan Reading Association (MRA)--*Michigan Reading Journal*
The Writing Teacher
The Writer's Notebook
The New Advocate

Professional materials listed can be ordered either from Cornucopia Books, a Michigan distributor which carries Heinemann, Boynton/Cook, Richard C. Owen, Christopher Gordon, Scholastic, and assorted other publishers, or by contacting publishers directly.

Ray Spaulding
Cornucopia Books
Great Lakes Division
P.O. Box 331
Comstock Park, Michigan 49321
(616) 247-0573
1-800-778-2665 (Mon, Wed, Fri, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)

Teachers &Writers Collaborative
5 Union Square West
New York, NY 10003-3306
(212) 691-6590 (Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST)

Heinemann
361 Hanover Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912
1-800-541-2086 (9 a.m.-6 p.m., EST)

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
1111 W. Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801-1096
(217) 328-3870

Harcourt Brace & Company
6277 Sea Harbor Drive
Orlando, FL 32887
1-800-782-4479

compiled by Dr. Ellen Brinkley, Western Michigan University, and
Laura Roop, Oakland Schools

COMMUNICATION ARTS
ELEMENTARY
INFORMATION PACKET

Section 2

- Grades 5 and 8 MEAP Writing Model of the Assessment

Michigan High School Proficiency Test

Communication Arts: Writing

Model of the Assessment

May 1995
Michigan Educational Assessment Program

Grade 5 Writing Assessment Plan

DAY 1 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Prewriting and Drafting

- Getting Started (5 minutes)
  Students are given time to think about a provided topic.

- Peer Discussion (10 minutes)
  In small groups, students discuss questions that help them explore and clarify ideas about the topic.

- Listening to and Sharing Responses (10 minutes)
  Students share ideas from peer discussion with large group.

- Prewriting and Drafting (20 minutes)
  Students begin drafting a response to the writing prompt.

DAY 2 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Drafting and Revising

- Review of Writing (3 minutes)

- Drafting and Revising (25 minutes)
  Students work on the development, focus, and organization of their pieces.

- Peer Response (17 minutes)
  Students confer with peer partners from Day 1.

DAY 3 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Revising and Polishing

- Review of Writing (5 minutes)
  Teacher reads aloud checklist of items to consider in revising and polishing piece.

- Final Revision and Polishing (40 minutes)

SCORING

The revised and polished piece of writing will be scored using 1) a 4-point holistic scale, 2) a scoring guide written by Michigan educators, and 3) sample scored student papers selected by Michigan educators.

TOPIC:

Change

THINKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

- What kind of changes have you faced?
- Have you faced changes like having a new baby brother or sister, or getting a new pet?
- When have you made changes like going to a new school, making a new friend, or becoming part of a team?
- How did you handle these experiences?
- What changes do you look forward to in the future?

WRITING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

Things changes in our lives. It might be someone's looks that change, how you change as you get older, or how people change their minds. **Write about a change.**

You might, for example, do one of the following:

tell about a time when you changed classes or teachers
OR
describe how you have changed from when you were younger
OR
show how someone can change his or her mind
OR
explain how changes in the weather can make you feel different
OR
write about the topic of change in another way.

You may use examples from real life, from what you read or watch, or from your imagination. Keep in mind that your writing will be read by adults.

DAY 2 DAY 2 DAY 2

DRAFTING AND REVISING

PEER RESPONSE

DIRECTIONS:

Talk about this question with your group, making sure everyone receives comments on his or her writing.

QUESTION FOR PARTNERS:

Which parts of my writing do you want to know more about? What do you want to know?

DAY 3 DAY 3 DAY 3

REVISING AND POLISHING

REVIEW OF WRITING

DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklists as you revise and polish the piece you have written.

CHECKLIST FOR REVISION:

1. Do I have enough ideas and details?
2. Does one idea lead to the next?
3. Does my writing show a beginning and an ending?

CHECKLIST FOR POLISHING:

1. Are my sentences complete?
2. Have I checked the spelling and capitalization of any words I'm unsure of?
3. Are my paragraphs indented?
4. Are there any words missing?
5. Have I checked my punctuation?

Holistic Scorepoint Descriptions
Grade 5

(These are designed to be used in conjunction with illustrative anchor papers and other range-finder papers and are intended to describe characteristics of most papers at a particular scorepoint. The aim is to determine best fit; a paper at any given scorepoint may not include all characteristics.)

4	**Mature**	Central ideas are clearly developed. The writing may have a natural flow and a clear sense of wholeness (beginning, middle, end); the organization helps move the reader through the text. There is likely to be a clear voice that is precise and interesting. The text demonstrates standard writing conventions.
3	**Capable**	A recognizable central idea is evident throughout. The writing has a sense of wholeness (beginning, middle, end) although it may have extraneous details. Word choices and sentence structure are likely to be interesting. There may be surface feature errors, but they don't interfere with understanding.
2	**Developing**	The writing shows a recognizable central idea, yet may not be sustained or developed. There is an attempt at organization although ideas may not be well connected or developed. Vocabulary may be limited or inappropriate to the task; sentence structure may be somewhat simple. Surface feature errors my make understanding difficult.
1	**Emerging**	The writing shows little or no development of a central idea. There may be little direction or organization but, nevertheless, an ability to get important words on paper is demonstrated. Vocabulary and sentence structure may be simple. Minimal control of surface features, such as spelling and usage, may severely interfere with understanding.

6	Not ratable because completely **off topic**
7	Not ratable because completely **illegible**
8	Not ratable because written in a **language other than English**
9	Not ratable because completely **blank**

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Plan

DAY 1 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Prewriting and Drafting

- Getting Started (5 minutes)
  Students are given time to think about a provided topic.

- Reading/Viewing Materials (5 minutes)
  Students read and view materials related to the topic.

- Peer Discussion (10 minutes)
  In small groups, students discuss questions that help them explore and clarify ideas about the topic.

- Listening to and Sharing Responses (5 minutes)
  Students share ideas from peer discussion with large group.

- Prewriting and Drafting (20 minutes)
  Students begin drafting a response to the writing prompt.

DAY 2 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Drafting and Revising

- Review of Writing (3 minutes)

- Drafting and Revising (25 minutes)
  Students work on the development, focus, and organization of their pieces.

- Peer Response (17 minutes)
  Students confer with peer partners from Day 1.

DAY 3 (45 minutes + 5 minutes preparation): Revising and Polishing

- Review of Writing (5 minutes)
  Teacher reads aloud checklist of items to consider in revising and polishing piece.

- Final Revision and Polishing (40 minutes)

SCORING

The revised and polished piece of writing will be scored using 1) a 4-point holistic scale, 2) a scoring guide written by Michigan educators, and 3) sample scored student papers selected by Michigan educators.

DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1

PREWRITING AND DRAFTING

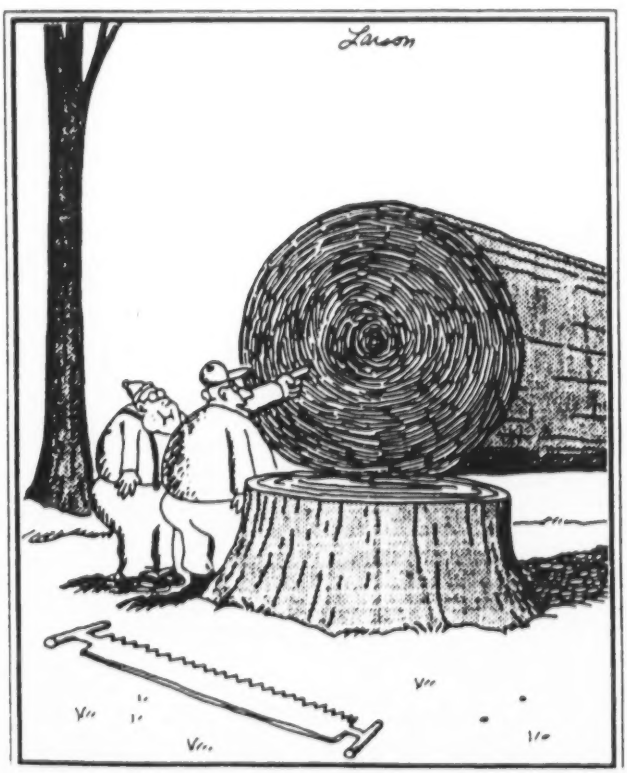
TOPIC:

Ecology

THINKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Aldo Leopold



© 1986 by Universal Press Syndicate From Gary Larson, The Far Side Gallery 2

"And see this ring right here, Jimmy? ... That's another time when the old fellow miraculously survived some big forest fire."

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Calvin and Hobbes

by Watterson

CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS? SOME IDIOT TOSSED GARBAGE HERE IN THIS BEAUTIFUL SPOT.
I'LL BET FUTURE CIVILIZATIONS FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US THAN WE'D LIKE THEM TO KNOW.
LOOK, ANOTHER CAN THROWN ON THE GROUND! BOY, THIS MAKES ME MAD!
BY GOLLY, IF PEOPLE AREN'T BURYING TOXIC WASTES OR TESTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THEY'RE THROWING TRASH EVERYWHERE!

THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane

06B

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DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1

DIRECTIONS:

Continue to think about the topic and the materials you looked at.

With your partners, go through the questions below. You may go through them in any order you wish as long as everyone has an opportunity to respond. You may wish to spend more time on the questions that most interest you and your partners. You will have 10 minutes to discuss these.

TALKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

• Many people believe that environmental issues need to be addressed if we are going to have the quality of life we hope to have in the future. Think about some of those issues.

• What are some of the things people can do to improve our environment?

• Can you predict what the earth might be like if we contaminate or use up all our natural resources (water, oil, lumber, soil, etc.)?

DAY 1 DAY 1 DAY 1

WRITING ABOUT THE TOPIC:

People often say that "our children are our future." Therefore, if we want our environment to be healthy, we need to educate even our youngest children. **Write a letter to a younger person, telling him or her why we need to take good care of our Earth and all of its living creatures.**

As you write, you might want to consider:

- something that happened to you or to someone you know

OR • something you read about in a book or newspaper
OR • something you heard about from someone else
OR • something you saw in a movie or on TV
OR • something else you can think of.

Keep in mind that your writing will be read by adults.

(You may use this area and the following pages for freewriting, clustering, outlining, webbing, listing, etc. When you are ready, you may begin your draft.)

DAY 2 DAY 2 DAY 2

DRAFTING AND REVISING

PEER RESPONSE

DIRECTIONS:

Respond to the following question. Be sure each person receives responses from the group. You will have 17 minutes for this activity.

QUESTION FOR PARTNERS:

Which parts of my writing do you want to know more about? What do you want to know?

DAY 3 DAY 3 DAY 3

REVISING AND POLISHING

REVIEW OF WRITING

DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist as you revise and polish the piece you have written.

CHECKLIST FOR REVISION:

1. Do I have enough ideas and details?
2. Does one idea lead to the next?
3. Does my writing show a beginning and an end?

CHECKLIST FOR POLISHING:

1. Are my sentences complete?
2. Have I checked the spelling and capitalization of any words I'm unsure of?
3. Are my paragraphs indented?
4. Are there any words missing?
5. Have I checked my punctuation?

06B

Holistic Scorepoint Descriptions
Grade 8

(These are designed to be used in conjunction with illustrative anchor papers and other range-finder papers and are intended to describe characteristics of most papers at a particular scorepoint. The aim is to determine best fit; a paper at any given scorepoint may not include all characteristics.)

4	**Mature**	Writing is clear, focused, and interesting. The organization helps move the reader through the text in an orderly manner. The voice of the writer comes through in the rich and precise word choice and varied sentence structure. Errors in standard writing conventions do not interfere with understanding.
3	**Capable**	Writing is clear and focused but may not be interesting. Organization is apparent but may be too-obviously structured or have extraneous detail. While some of the writer's voice may come through, the word choice is ordinary, and sentence structure may be mechanical. There may be distracting surface feature errors, but they don't interfere with understanding.
2	**Developing**	Writing may include basic detail without much development. There may be an attempt at organization although ideas may lack a sense of wholeness. Vocabulary may be limited or inappropriate to the task; sentence structure may be simple. Surface feature errors may make understanding difficult.
1	**Emerging**	Writing may lack a central idea of purpose. Organization may be arbitrary. Vocabulary is limited; sentences may be choppy, incomplete, or rambling. Numerous surface feature errors may severely interfere with understanding.

6	Not ratable because completely **off topic**
7	Not ratable because completely **illegible**
8	Not ratable because written in a **language other than English**
9	Not ratable because completely **blank**

MEAP Writing Assessment in Grade 5

Sample Student Papers

Note: To protect the identity of students whose writing samples are provided here, written responses have been re-copied in another's handwriting and any identifying information has been removed.

Grade 5
Paper A

Things Change in Our Lives

Some people have different changes in their lives. Sometimes you read about in a book or newspaper a newspaper can tell you about the weather and what today's weather is going to be a good day

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Grade 5
Paper B

Mrs. Doughtfire

I went to the movies one cnight to see Mrs. Doughtfire. It is very funny and sad in some parts. Well the family was happy. But it was the boys birth day and the dad threw big party for them and wrecked the brought a zoo there and the mom had to clean it up. While they were talking the mom said she wanted to get a devource, and they did. That was sad.

The judge said that he can only see the kids once a week. The dad said to the judge I need to see my kids more then once a week. He was crying.

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Grade 5
Paper C

Having a new baby brother or sister is a big change. All the attention would go to the baby. But yet you can help. Like for instance I get to help with my new baby brother.

I think getting a new baby in the house can be the biggest change is your life. Mom and dad will have to pay more attention to the new baby you could be talking to them and the baby starts to cry, they are gone.

I have 3 younger sisters and brothers it happens to me alot. That is why I just want 1 child so I don't hurt their feeling. All kids have special needs. It was a big change.

Cody is very long on his first Christmas he pulled Santas beard off and bit him. Cody now eats 5 bottles a day counting juice. Cody was born on June 1, 1993 he is 10 months old.

Cody loves all people. He especially loves me and my mom. He only gives kisses and hugs to us. He is very funny

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Grade 5
Paper D

I have a new baby sister. She is two and a half years old. I don't get much attention any more by my dad. He works and I don't live with him. My baby sister Saphra (SAF-RA) gets everything. My dad said I used to get everything but I don't belive him. While he is at work I play with her, watch Barney, with her put her to sleep. When dad gets home I sometimes get to talk to him but he usaly has to pick up Saphras toys, vacum then we eat.

In the future I hope to get more attention. But I still love my dad. He is the BEST dad IN THE WHOLE WORLD WIDE UNIVERSE.

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Grade 5
Paper E

Changes

In my life my change was moving to Rochester, everything changed then. I had to go to a new house, to a new school, make new friends, and lots more.

When we first moved here I was really mad at my dad because I didn't want to move I missed my friends and my relatives that lived by me. I missed my dog and cat I had to give up (because they weren't indoor pets) but most of all I missed my mom because she had to stay where we used to live (which is in Lansing) because she couldn't get off her job that easily. Plus she had to find a new job there in Rochester.

But now all of those changes don't bother me so much. I've made lots of new friends, I got a new pet, I like my new school, and every once in a while I get to see my mom.

So I realized that when things change, new things happen to make up for some of those changes in your life. Like when I lost my old friends I made new friends, when I had to give away my cat and dog I got a new pet hamster, I moved from my old to a new school where I made most of my friends, I really like my new house, it's in a pretty subdivision, it's bigger than my old house, the people there are friendly, and we have a pretty lake front in the back of our house. So now when I look back at those changes in my life, I really don't mind them as much.

Grade 5
Paper F

Change

"Mom, Dad are we going to the movies tonight" I asked my parents. "Yes Gabrielle we are" my mom replied. That is what my family used to do till my Mom started getting fat. First I thought it was just because she ate a lot (I thought that when I was six years old). But later that night my Mom said "Gabrielle I have something important to tell you." "What is it Mom" I replied. "You are going to have a baby sister or brother" She said it a soft voice.

Ever day my Mom was getting fatter to make room for the baby in her stomach. Then one day my Mom came home with a book about Mommies and their babies. Then my Mom started going to this place where a midwife that was going to help her have the baby was. My mom was going to have the baby at home with help from a ~~us~~ midwife.

It was July 23 that my Dad woke me up he said "Gabrielle go down stairs and eat breakfast" So I did

Then I came back upstairs, I heard noises of pain. It was my mom in pain. Then a car pulled up in the driveway. It was the midwife. Then the Midwife told my Mom to push. I thought that was weird Then I saw something come out of my mom it was a baby. After the baby came out the midwife asked me if I wanted to see if it was a boy or girl. I said "NO" so my Dad did. He said it was a girl. So then I, mom and Meghan got cleaned up. My sister got more gifts but not for me. Things have change with her but I still love her.

The
End.

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Grade 5
Paper G

Things Change in Our Lives

Ever since my cat ran away, I have been catching turtles, snakes, frogs, and any other kinds of creatures I could find around the woods because I wanted a pet just for me. I guess you could say I felt kind of lonely. My mom knew what I wanted so one day, she asked me if I would like to take a walk with her and she took me down the road to a person's house where they were giving away kittens. My mom picked one up and asked me if I wanted it. I said "Yes!" and we took it home. I felt like I went crazy trying to name her, but finally I figured out the perfect name for her. The name was Tabatha.

Now I have more responsabilities than ever. I have to clean out her cat box every other day and keep filling her food and water dish every day. There are a lot of good things too, for example. Before I had Tabatha, I

would open a can of tuna and have nothing to do with the juice so I would just pour it into the sink. Now, I mix it with the cat food. I finally have something to do with all those bouncing balls I have. I gave them all to Tabatha.

Tabatha has kittis of her own now that makes me the grandmother of her kittens. In a way, I have two families. My human family and the one with Tabatha and her kittens.

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Grade 5
Paper H

One day I decided to go ride my dirt bike on some trails. I started out fine at first. I was hoping for a nice peaceful ride. Then I fell over. A branch had caught my spokes and I fell. It didn't hurt but my bike weighed about 250 pounds and it was hard to pick up. After that I decided to go home. I started back because I was suppose to check in every 5 minutes and I was late. So I hurried and I don't know what happened but my gears wouldn't shift down so I couldn't slow down. There was a big bump and a ramped it. I went sailing through the air and made a bad landing. That's when I realized I was on the ground sliding along the sand. Then my bike stopped sliding and I kept going. I almost ran into a tree but I stopped sliding before I hit the tree. That's when I realized my leg was all torn up my leg hurt it really bad. I didn't know if I could get up.

Finaly I made myself get up. When I got up I noticed that my chain was off the sprocket. I didn't know if I could get back to my house or not. That's when I saw two hunters walking this way. I almost instantly knew who it was. It was our neighbors and they helped me out a little. They helped get the chain on and let me go home. It was hard to ride because my left leg hurt so much. When I got home I went straight to bed. My leg didn't feel any better when I got up in the morning. I couldn't gym or recess. My leg took a long time to heal and now I know that my left leg will never be the same again. It will never have the strength I had in it before.

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EXPLANATIONS OF SCORES
Grade 5

02A Change

A

This paper does not develop the prompt. After beginning with a topic sentence that is on task, the response continues with a rambling sentence that can only be vaguely connected to the topic sentence.

Score: 1

B

The response begins to summarize the plot of a recent movie, only to lose its way. It does not make the connection between the movie's plot and the prompt for this task, nor does it display any logical structure or purpose.

Score: 1

C

The response's simplistic style is more typical of a younger student. When the response addresses the prompt, it is with poor mechanical skills and limited vocabulary. When the response moves from a discussion of change to details about the baby ("Cody is very long...."), the reader can sense the writer saw that the original piece was too short and decided to add on the last two paragraphs.

Score: 2

D

While this is a stronger paper than # 07160, the response presents a confusing situation. Does the narrator live with his/her father or not? Change, the topic of the prompt, is only suggested. Again, the writer, perhaps sensing that there is not enough writing on the page, tacks on a tribute to his/her father. The paper lacks structure and has weak development.

Score: 2

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E

This response gets right to work on the prompt with a steady introduction. It sustains the momentum with well-developed paragraphs and ends the piece with a summary statement. While it shows control of writing conventions such as transitions, it repeats many of the points and has a problem with run-on sentences.

Score: 3

F

This paper tells a good tale, although lapses in logic cause confusion (e.g., they did not go to the movies because the mother was getting fat; the writer was six when she thought her mother was eating too much, but "lated that night" the mother tells her about the baby). Some sentences are run-ons; others are repetitive ("Then....", "Then....", "Then....").

Score: 3

G

This nicely sustained piece stays on target throughout while exhibiting the writer's attitude toward the subject in a voice that is appropriate to the task. The response not only tells us about the new pet but also adds details of how life has changed because of cat ownership. With its clear sense of beginning, middle, and end, the paper achieves a sense of wholeness while exhibiting control over language through sentence variety and precise diction.

Score: 4

H

The response shares vivid memories of a bike accident that has the reader visualizing the scene as she/he "ramped it" and "went sailing through the air." Not a strong 4 paper, this piece nevertheless has a clear central idea that is richly developed with details. It uses a variety of sentence beginnings and makes few errors in grammar and usage.

Score: 4-

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MEAP Writing Assessment in Grade 8

Sample Student Papers

Note: To protect the identity of students whose writing samples are provided here, written responses have been re-copied in another's handwriting and any identifying information has been removed.

Grade 8
Paper A

Dear young person,

I think we should take care of our planet now instead of just complaining. I think we should be kind to the animals, plant trees, and help the ones that are dieing, recycle, turn of the the lights when you don't need them. Or we won't have a place to live any more.

yours truely
Jamie

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Dear Person,

Lets get on to the subject.

Nature is very butiful and filled with wonderous animals and plants. Creatures we have never heard of or know about. So when I get older my children and your children can see the forest and be able to be out there with the animals of the forest. To build huts and breath fresh air when they are older. So lets not litter and try to plant more trees for fresh air.

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Dear Children

Stop throwing cans and candy wrappers on the groun. Because it is toxic to are Earth. Are trees well die because we are throwing toxic wate around. And stop testing on creatures fo makeup. It is killing them. We are throwing oil in are rivers that is killing are fish and it is killing are birds and us because we drink the water. We need to clean the wastes and make it a better place for fish and are creatures, and us. We need to stop and do sometrink about it now before it is to late.

Thank you.

Miran

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Grade 8
Paper D

Dear Chris,

I am writing you because I am concerned about our environment. I believe we should start to clean up our environment because it makes certain people sad to see their world down like it is. I think we should be concerned about topic of contamination because it is very hard to live in a country with contamination. First off I know if you through numerous amount of oil or other harmful wastes on the ground it will soak into the soil until it is in your drinking water. If the contamination gets into your water with out you knowing, you can become very ill because of the water. Even though you got sick you will probaly have to dig a new well somewhere else and this will cost more than not throwing the oil on the ground. Children should encourage their parents to take their used oil to a local gas station where they will put it to good use. The job of saving the environment is in your hands so you better do your ~~fair~~ part.

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Grade 8
Paper E

Dear Future Earth Protectors,

You are probably not aware yet of the Earth's dangers, but I am writting this to you to warn you about them, and if you dont take care of the earth the danger you will be in.

We need to do everything we can to make the earth a better place to live and it is going to take your help. It is only 19% right now and the earth is already in danger and it get worse everyday, you and I have both done some damage to the earth and now its about time to start making up for it!

There are probably very little Rain forests left now if any, Do to humans cutting down trees for their lumber, and to make papers, and while you cutting down trees they're also killing animals that could have reflected on us because you never know one of those animals could have had the cure for to aids or some other deadly diseases. That is why people need to start recycling if they are not already! Everything should be recycled when you're done with it, so it can be made into something new!

Another problem on the planet is littering you should never litter, because usually nobody will ever pick it up and it will go into the ground and decompose which usually takes up to ten years, so just put your wrappers or whatever in your pockets and when you get to a trash can empty out your pockets it is as easy as that.

I know you have a while for this one but when you turn 16 you will be wanting to drive everywhere and show off you car and see your friends but when you are drive your polluting the air and hurting the ozone layer - if there still is a ozone layer by then - but anyways if you can try to walk or even ride your bike so that your doing something good for yourself and the environment!

So as you can see the earth is in danger and we need your help but if we dont get the younger generation to start helping there wont be a young generation! So if you want to see tomorrow you better start helping now!

Your Present Earth Protector

Maggie

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The Letter

Dear younger generation,
I do not now if you relize how emportant our Earth is to us. We need to make this the Best place to be, and the best place to live. If we do not recycle, or if we continise to litter the earth would look like a dump! Another reason why we should respect our Earth is for a longer life span, the polution is damage to our earth, and our health. The more polution and littering causes starvation of many things (humans, Plants, and animals).

If we used up all the soil we have right now then we could not grow plants, or even crops to eat, and the animals could not eat either. When we polute our waters the animals would not have anything to drink, (they would dehydrate).

If everyone recycled papes, tin cans and other things then the Earth would be a much cleaner and healthier place to live. Respect the planet you live on - someday it could be ruined, and then you would relize how precious life is for you and your planet. I am asking you to help make this a better place - recycle, you would be surprised to what a little difference could make.

We need our trees for animals homes, and among other things - instead of cutting so many trees down for papes, all of it could simply be recycled. The real point I am trying to get across to you is that we need more things recycled, and less things used up and thrown away. The less polution and littering will equal less damage done to our Earth, which we call home.

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Grade 8
Paper G

Dear Younger Person,

Everyday more and more people are contributing to the destruction of our earth. From littering in the park to huge oil spills humans are slowly destroying Earth.

Already, many species of plants and animals are extinct because their natural habitats have been destroyed by deforestation.

The air, too, is feeling the pain of our global destruction. Every day tons of smoke and other harmful chemicals like aerosols are polluting the air and wearing the ozone layer thinner and thinner. Small changes are being made to control pollution and to devise alternatives to aerosols and heavily polluting vehicles.

Our planet's water is being contaminated by farming chemicals, trash, and accidents such as sewage leaks and oil spills. Fish, turtles, coral, and many other species of water life are threatened by undersea dumping and catching for commerce and sport. Laws are being made to control this,

but many people continue to do it.

Natural resources are being used up by mining, drilling, etc. These resources are extremely useful and sometimes a necessity, but people are using more than necessary. Recycling reduces the amount of trees we have to cut down, but trees are the most renewable resource we have. Others like coal and oil take millions of years to form, so once they're gone they're gone.

Using nuclear and chemical weapons has extremely harmful effects on wildlife, plants, the air and people. Burning tires and styrofoam releases chemicals that are harmful to the ozone layer.

These are the most severe ways man is polluting the earth. But what can you do? Well, you can start by not littering, saving water, and recycling. Later in life, maybe you will be able to help in other ways. But you must start respecting the earth now or else you'll grow up and do exactly what people have been doing for years (i.e. use aerosols, and burn tires).

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Everybody does that the world may be very different.

For example, if the ozone layer is worn too thin the suns extremely dangerous ultra-violet rays will not be held back. If that happens, we will be forced to stay inside to shield ourselves from the rays. If we use up our coal and oil we wouldn't be able to drive cars and would have to rely on nuclear power. If the animals that complete the food chain die, we won't have anything to eat. When the rain forests are cut down oxygen cannot be made. Each of these effects would follow the one before it and ultimately would mean the extinction of the human race.

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Grade 8
Paper H

Dear young readers,

The earth is in great danger today and will keep living like that more and more each day. That is why we all need to join together to help make it a better place for all of us.

The environment today has several problems. One in particular is that of our natural resources. Thousand of trees have died this year alone. The main causes were fires and us, the people. The fires in California destroyed several acres of precious trees and many other resources. We tried very hard, though, to stop them. Unlike the rain forests, it is us causing the damage and are not trying as hard to fix it. We have done things to help, such as recycle to cut down on the amount of trees killed, but we haven't done enough. Recycling helps some, but we should also do things such as plant new trees to replace the ones lost. If we don't all begin to do this eventually, year after year, there will be less of what we need most. Trees give us so much, our oxygen, paper, and a place to live. They are what makes the earth such a wonderful place.

Not only are we affected by the loss of trees, but all of the earths living creatures are. They are driven out of their homes and left destitute. The fires destroy their habitat in a matter of seconds, separating families, leaving them without food, shelter, and even sometimes killing them. This is a terrible thing to have to happen to such innocent creatures, but because of our ignorance it happens. Hopefully, in the future we will begin to learn more and do more about our environment. If we don't we will be left helpless in a world of nothing.

We are what makes the earth the way it is today. There are several other problems like pollution and waste management, but I feel strongly about our environments resources. There won't be an environment if we don't start thinking more wisely for future generations to come.

Sincerely,
Lee

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EXPLANTIONS OF SCORES
Grade 8

06B Ecology

A

Either lack of effort, lack of skills, or both has produced this example of insufficient development of the topic. Proficiency in control of conventions or style is not demonstrated.

Score: 1

B

No connections are made here either with the prompt or with the various elements of this piece. The response wanders from one idea to another, accomplishing no sense of order or coherence.

Score: 1

C

Along with misspellings of fairly common words, the response exhibits numerous sentence problems. The few ideas that are related are not sufficient to raise the score of this piece.

Score: 2

D

The response sensibly tries to convince the reader to take action in only one area--although recycling oil may not be appealing to a younger child. While the response stays on course, it displays a repetitious style with little engaging vocabulary.

Score: 2

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E

This lively piece displays a tone that should speak to its young audience. For example, in the next to last paragraph, the response says: " I know you have a while for this one but when you turn 16 you will be wanting to drive everywhere and show off you car...." Throughout, word choices and phrases are appropriate for the task. The response demonstrates good control of conventions and a clearly developed plan.

Score: 3

F

This piece offers many bits of advice but not in a voice that would appeal to young people. The unexciting prose would not impress a young reader nor would the fatherly admonishment to "Respect the planet you live on--someday it could be ruined and then you would relize how precious life is for you and your planet."

Score: 3

G

Adding to this writer's extensive knowledge about environmental issues is the ability to express ideas with clarity and precise vocabulary. The varied and complex sentence structures enhance a voice that engages the audience with its apparent commitment to the topic. This is one of the few writers to use a literary device such as personification: "The air, too, is feeling the pain of our global destruction."

Score: 4

H

This paper illustrates that one does not have to know big words or have vast knowledge about the subject to achieve a score of 4. The writer writes simply but not childishly, developing the topic with appropriate details and sincerity of purpose. With the varied sentence patterns and direct voice, the response communicates the position clearly.

Score: 4

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The Michigan High School Proficiency Test
Communication Arts: Writing
and
MEAP Writing Assessments in Grades 5 and 8

A Guide to How Writing Is Scored: A Supplement to the Models of the Assessments

March 1995 Draft

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The Michigan High School Proficiency Test
Communication Arts: Writing
and
MEAP Writing Assessments in Grades 5 and 8

A Guide to How Writing Is Scored: A Supplement to the Models of the Assessments

This information was designed to help Michigan English/language arts teachers understand the scorepoint descriptions and the scoring process used in evaluating the student writing produced in response to the assessments. We believe the close study of how student writing is assessed is a potent means of staff development in preparation for the first administrations of the assessments.

The Scoring Process

As the writing samples are gathered by the contractor, a random sample of several hundred responses are drawn in such a way as to represent the work of students throughout the state. These pieces of writing are read carefully by a team of experienced readers in a "rangefinding" session. The readers include teachers from Michigan public schools, professors from Michigan universities, representatives from the Michigan Department of Education, and personnel representing the test contractor. These individuals separately read and score the sample of student writing. Afterwards, the participants gather in a central location to discuss scores on papers and to reach consensus on those scores. These scored writing samples are then used as training material by the contractor. Readers/scorers are trained in the discipline of holistic scoring, and after an intensive and thorough training and qualifying process, readers begin scoring.

The work of readers/scorers is monitored for accuracy. Every writing sample is read by at least two readers, with second readers never knowing first readers' scores. Discrepancies of more than one point are resolved by a third, more experienced reader. Readers are periodically retested and retrained during the scoring session.

Holistic Scoring

The most basic assumption in holistic scoring is that readers process and assess all elements of written products simultaneously. When we function as normal readers, that is when we are not reading student papers, we don't consider questions like "How well is this organized?" or "Is the diction appropriate?" or "Are there too many misspelled words?" Normal readers consume text as a whole while they discover and construct meaning. This does not mean that discreet elements of writing are not important, only that these elements are part of a whole. In assessing that whole, we want to consider its overall impact. The central question becomes: "How well does the writer *connect* with me, the reader?"

All of the identifiable elements of written products contribute to the quality and effectiveness of the writer's connection with the reader, and as teachers we are accustomed

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to helping students achieve this goal by working on such separate elements as organization, diction, and mechanics. But when people read, they read in order to be communicated with. All those discrete elements of writing must function *together* for both writers and readers engaged in the basic human enterprise of communication. One of the challenges of holistic scoring is to duplicate the normality of the reading process in the artificial world of student writing and its assessment by teachers. We do this by forming consensus on how the separate elements of written products function as part of the larger communicative process.

A large body of scholarship and extensive professional practice over many years has refined and validated the procedures of holistic scoring. These procedures are the most widely used method of large-scale writing assessment and have been used by Educational Testing Service, American College Testing, CTB-McGraw Hill, and many others. Holistic scoring is also used in many school districts in Michigan, so its procedures are already familiar to many teachers and administrators.

Some of the elements of holistic scoring include the following:

- Scoring is a controlled event, occurring at the same time and place.
- Scorepoint descriptions are refined and given definition by actual samples of student writing.
- Readers are trained to score each assessment by studying the scoring guides (scorepoint descriptions and accompanying rangefinding-scored student responses) and by coming to consensus on what is valued in writing.
- Readers become qualified by experience with holistic scoring and by being held accountable for their accuracy and their fidelity to the scoring guides.
- Readers form an impression of an entire piece of writing, taking all elements into consideration simultaneously.
- Writing samples are read by at least two readers with a third, more experienced reader adjudicating discrepancies.

The Scorepoint Descriptions

The first four scores (1 to 4) are the only ones that count numerically. The others (5 to 9) are administrative designations for student writing that is unratable under holistic methodology.

These scorepoint descriptions identify the kind of writing that typifies each of the four score levels. Obviously, writing proficiency is a continuous variable rather than a discrete variable. We see a continuum of increasing writing proficiency; the four scorepoints are cuts established to help us describe the differing levels of ability. Within each level there will be a wide range of variation. The purpose of the scorepoint descriptions is to illustrate the most typical papers at a given level and to help readers come to a common understanding of the four levels. The scorepoint descriptions are not a checklist, nor are they reducible to a numerical formula, in that each component is not worth, say, twenty- or twenty-five percent of the holistic score. Teachers may use more detailed analytical grids as diagnostic instruments in their classrooms. However, holistic scoring provides a rating rather than diagnostic feedback.

The general directive to readers doing holistic scoring is to credit what the writer has done well. The approach is positive. This is not a hunt for errors, lapses, and inadequacies. When a piece of writing gets a low score, it is because the writing exhibits fewer positive features than another piece of writing. In other words, there is no "taking points off" for

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this or that deficiency. Similarly, holistic scoring does not attempt to assess the writer, only the writing.

HSPT Part 1: Reporting and Reflecting

Students bring to the assessment two pieces of writing from their own portfolios. Currently, these pieces are not scored. However, we are looking forward to future iterations of this assessment that look more like portfolio evaluations.

The first part of the actual assessment then asks students to reflect and comment upon their writing as typified by their two portfolio pieces. Students are expected to refer to one or both of these pieces in their responses.

What we are looking for here is the ability of students to look at themselves as writers and to write convincingly in this self-reflexive mode. The ability to stand back and observe our own performance of a complex task is an important step in developing mastery of that task. This is certainly true of writing. In addition, a collateral purpose of Part I is to encourage and validate writing across the whole curriculum. It serves no good purpose if students associate writing only with English classes. So, whether they are writing literary analysis or lab reports or something related to vocational training, they are writers, and we want them to be able to define themselves that way.

Part 1 Prompts

The prompts for Part 1 invite students to comment on their own writing in a specific way. Thirty minutes is allotted to this task.

Notice that the prompt does *not* invite generalities about the writing process nor about *the* writing process. The directive is very specific. Ample allowance in the scoring is made for the time limitation; this is scored as first-draft writing.

Scoring Part 1

As you look at the sample student responses, you will see that holistic scoring rewards students for what they do well. The underlying spirit of holistic scoring is positive: "How full is the glass?" rather than "How empty is the glass?" As you read the papers in order of increasing proficiency, you will probably see that responses have more positive features than the previous responses and that the scores reflect the accumulation of those positive values. This is not the same as saying the score is a gauge of a response's *length*. Certainly a long piece of writing can be incoherent, and a relatively short one can be sophisticated. Before going on, you might find it useful to review the papers again, this time in tandem with the scorepoint descriptions.

Different configurations of strengths and weaknesses can still get the same score. Another point to be emphasized here is that holistic reading isn't simply reading for style and mechanics. We are reading holistically, and that *whole* that we read includes *the quality of the response to the task.*. It is important to remember that each of the score levels encompasses a range of abilities and that responses scored as a 4 do not have to be perfect, especially in Parts I and II where we are evaluating first drafts written under severe time constraints.

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Michigan Writing Assessments: Similarities and Differences

MEAP Grade 5 & 8 Assessments	New High School Proficiency Test
based on Michigan State Board of Education approved documents: *Essential Goals and Objectives for Writing* (1985) and *Model Core Curriculum Outcomes* (1991)	based on Michigan State Board of Education approved documents: *Essential Goals and Objectives for Writing* (1985) and *Model Core Curriculum Outcomes* (1991)
1 writing task	3 writing tasks
3 testing sessions (approx 45 min each)	3 testing sessions (approx 40 min, 45 min, 115 min)
	2 portfolio pieces required
	reflective writing task (Part 1)
topic is provided	topic is provided
reading/viewing materials (gr 8 only)	reading/viewing materials
	exploratory writing task (Part 2)
small group discussion	small group discussion
large group sharing	large group sharing
prewriting and drafting	
review of writing	review of writing
drafting and revising	extended writing task (Part 3): drafting and revising
peer response	
review of writing	
final revision and proofreading	final revision and proofreading
4-point holistic scoring	4-point holistic scoring of each of the 3 pieces

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